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**Austrian tourists admiring an exhibit at the haj and photography exhibition, 'Al-Haj: Malaysian Experience', at the Islamic Arts Museum in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. Pic by Farizul Hafiz Awang**

# Kedah haj pilgrims can fly to Jeddah from Sept 9

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Haj pilgrims from Kedah will be able to fly directly to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, beginning next month.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharom said this was the first direct flight from the Alor Star airport to the Holy Land.

"Previously, pilgrims from Kedah transited through Kuala Lumpur International Airport. But, now it is not necessary and over 1,000 pilgrims will benefit when the first flight departs from Alor Star airport on Sept 9," he said at a press conference after launching a haj and photography exhibition titled "Al-Haj: Malaysian Experience" at the Islamic Arts Museum here, yesterday.

Jamil Khir said currently, there were six airports in the country that offered direct flights to Jeddah.

"Now, the Alor Star airport will be the seventh airport in the country offering such a facility," adding that the airport would have three direct flights to Jeddah.

Other airports that offered direct flights to Jeddah included the Kuching, Kuala Terengganu and Kota Kinabalu airports in Sarawak, Terengganu and Sabah respectively.

On the exhibition, Jamil Khir said it was a good exposure in elevating the public's understanding on issues relating to religious duty that must be carried out by every able-bodied Muslim.

"I am confident that this exhibi-

tion will evoke interest among the younger generation (Muslims) to register themselves and carry out their haj as soon as possible."

The exhibition, on till Nov 20, has artefacts, arts and photography that explores the importance of haj as one of the five pillars of Islam and examines the history of Lembaga Tabung Haji (TH).

The exhibition, held in conjunction with TH's golden jubilee anniversary, is a collaborative effort between TH, Islamic Arts Museum and the *New Straits Times*.

Present were TH chairman Datuk Abdul Azeez Abdul Rahim, TH managing director and chief executive officer Datuk Ismee Ismail and MPH group director Prof Datuk Dr Abdullah Abdul Rahman.